

EAST NORRITON TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2015

SCANNED
TO GIS

3/19/15 

A meeting of the East Norriton Township Planning Commission was held at the East Norriton Township Building, 2501 Stanbridge Street in East Norriton, Pennsylvania on Wednesday, February 18, 2015. The reorganization meeting was called to order at 7:02pm. Attending were Planning Commission members Robert Schottmiller, Keith Tornetta, John Kolb, Judy Belkowski, Kevin McDevitt, George Kennedy, Harold Smith and Kandy Heckman. Zoning Officer, Bryan Bortnichak was also in attendance.

1. **Reorganization:**

Mr. McDevitt made a motion to appoint Mr. Schottmiller as Chairman of the Planning Commission. The motion was seconded by Ms. Heckman and passed 8-0.

Chairman Schottmiller took over the meeting and called for a motion to appoint a vice-chairman. Mr. Tornetta made a motion to appoint Mr. McDevitt as vice-chairman of the Planning Commission. The motion was seconded by Ms. Heckman and passed 8-0.

2. **Approve Minutes of the December 19, 2014 Planning Commission Meeting:**

Chairman Schottmiller called for a motion to approve the minutes of the Planning Commission's December 19, 2014 meeting. Ms. Heckman made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. McDevitt seconded the motion and the motion passed 8-0.

3. **Zoning Hearing Board Case 2015-3, 409 West Germantown Pike**

Present: Amany S. Estfanous & Bassem F. Basily, Owners

Ms. Estfanous and Mr. Basily expressed their desire to have a one-chair hair salon at the property which they own and in which they reside. Mr. Basily explained that the salon portion would only occupy the lowest level of the split level house and that there is sufficient parking.

Mr. Tornetta asked if any addition would be constructed to accommodate the salon. Mr. Basily advised that no addition would be constructed.

In response to a question from Mr. Schottmiller, Mr. Basily explained that they will be paving the driveway and he referred to an exhibit that was provided as part of the Zoning Hearing Board application depicting two angled parking spaces.

Mr. Tornetta asked if there is sufficient room to turn around. Mr. Bortnichak advised that the site accommodates five vehicles but that there is no vehicle circulation. Mr. Tornetta suggested 90 degree parking spaces and Mr. Basily expressed a willingness to expand the driveway.

Mr. Smith suggested that the applicant should ask for two chairs instead of one due to limitations that may be imposed by the Zoning Hearing Board.

Ms. Heckman made a motion to approve the application with the requested waivers. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tornetta and the motion passed 8-0.

4. **Weis Gas Pump Conceptual Plan, 25 West Germantown Pike**

Present: Mark Curcio, Stoltz Property Management

Mr. Curcio explained that Weis has only a few years left on their lease and expressed difficulties in trying to attract tenants to the shopping center when the anchor tenant, Weis, may not renew their current lease. He noted that Weis would like to provide gas before they enter into a long-term lease with the shopping center. Mr. Curcio noted that having a long-term lease with an anchor tenant will make it easier to obtain tenants in the remainder of the shopping center.

Mr. Curcio noted that the gas pumps would go in the southwest corner of the shopping center and that the first entrance to the shopping center from the driveway off of Germantown Pike would have to be moved slightly to the north. He noted that they have not fully engineered the site but that the proposal would result in the loss of approximately 40 parking spaces, though they would look to offset that loss at other locations on the site.

Mr. Schottmiller expressed concern with the loss of parking and the presence of gas pumps at this location. Mr. Kolb asked about the possibility of Weis leaving if the pumps were approved and then operated as a private gas station. Mr. Curcio suggested that the approval could be worded such that the gas pumps would have to be operated by a tenant of the shopping center.

Mr. Bortnichak inquired about traffic circulation and potential queuing concerns if the pumps are constructed to provide for a one-way circulation. Mr. Curcio noted that the gas pumps would be accessed by vehicles from two directions and that no one-way circulation is proposed.

Mr. Smith noted that he sees the lower parking area where the pumps are proposed vacant most of the time and he thinks this is an excellent idea. Mr. Smith pointed out that the Township needs to help merchants and encourage a vibrant business community.

Mr. Curcio explained that the shopping center is trying to help their tenants compete with the existing Walmart and with a potential Walmart super center on the adjacent property.

Mr. Schottmiller reiterated his concern about parking in the center and the impact on traffic. He also pointed out that there are 20 parking spaces near the store that are being removed. Ms. Belkowski asked about underground storage tanks and who would be responsible for them if Weis were to declare bankruptcy. Mr. Curcio noted that there is an elaborate regulatory process that oversees fuel tanks.

Mr. Kolb suggested a zoning analysis to look at parking throughout the shopping center. Mr. McDevitt asked if there are any Weis sites in the area that provide gasoline. Mr. Curcio noted that the nearest location is in Reading.

Mr. Kennedy noted that parking seems to be the dominant theme of the discussion and that losing spaces in front of the store is not conducive to public safety. Mr. Kennedy suggested that it would be helpful if a representative from Weis were present to answer operational questions about the proposal and store operations.

Mr. Schottmiller called for a vote to determine which Planning Commission members were in favor of or opposed to the conceptual plan. The Planning Commission members voted 6-2 in opposition to the conceptual plan with Mr. Smith and Mr. Kolb in favor of the plan. Planning Commission members agreed to review the conceptual plan again if Mr. Curcio would like to provide some clearer figures in regard to parking and to bring with him a representative of Weis who could provide answers to some of their questions.

5. **Other Business:**

Planning Commission members reviewed the Land Development and Construction update that was provided by Mr. Bortnichak. Mr. Kolb inquired about Zoning Hearing Board decisions and the Planning Commission directed Mr. Bortnichak to provide them with future decisions from the Zoning Hearing Board.

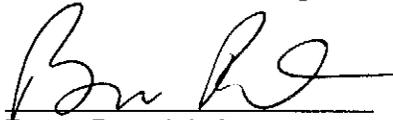
6. **Adjournment:**

Ms. Heckman made a motion to adjourn. The motion was second by Mr. McDevitt and passed 8-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Chairman Robert Schottmiller
East Norriton Township Planning Commission



Bryan Bortnichak
Zoning Officer